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STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, D.C., MAY 30: Senate Republican leaders disclosed in a Memorial Day statement issued today that they are maturing a National Readiness Plan designed to assure speedy military, civilian, and industrial mobilization in the event of a future national emergency. Joining in the statement were Senators Owen Brewster (Maine), Styles Bridges (N.H.), Kenneth S. Wherry (Neb.), Homer Ferguson (Mich.), Albert W. Hawkes (N.J.), Henry C. Dworshak (Idaho), and Alexander Wiley (Wis.).

The statement read: "Today the Nation pauses in humble commemoration of its war dead. Two years after victory the country's losses are felt in homes, fields and factories no less than during the war years. Many of these men were lost because the Nation was inadequately prepared for total warfare. Our defense was based on the needs of past wars rather than on current or future developments. We cannot allow America to suffer again the sacrifice of its manhood.

"It is becoming apparent that the country's defenses are likely to solidify once more along the old lines. Exhaustive study has shown that our defense is rapidly falling behind. If we permit this trend to proceed further we will not have kept faith with those who died. We are determined that our war dead shall rest in consecrated peace.

"Bearing in mind the responsibility the United States carries today in the preservation of world peace it is our belief that a National Readiness Plan must be instituted which will provide for:

"1. Coordinated civilian organization responsible for swift mobilization of home defense and civilian affairs.

"2. Continuing assessment, quantitative and qualitative, of the Nation's emergency manpower needs.

"3. Incentives for encouragement of training in the specific skills vital in production for defense.

"4. Effective plans for swift industrial mobilization.

"5. Retention of Selective Service records with some machinery to keep the manpower survey current.

"6. Increasing the number of volunteers entering the armed services. To the end that an adequate army, Navy, and Air Force be maintained.

"7. Strengthening the Organized Reserves and National Guard.

"8. Maintaining the highest level of research development and intelligence services.

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"We must face realistically the character of total war. Scientific progress and the development of new weapons confront us with techniques and tactics of mass destruction. Modern aggressive warfare demands equally strong and alert defense measures. National readiness will be our only means of survival in any future war, whether imminent or distant.

"Our war dead have died so that we might have abundant lives. The homes and loved-ones for whom they fought must not be forsaken through apathy. Only unceasing effort of each and every American can assure the bounty and security they left behind.

"The National Readiness Plan now being studied and matured will aid in providing that security. Parts of the Readiness Plan have been under long study by Republicans interested in national defense. A problem as vast as this involves an enormous amount of careful, detailed study and thought. We are taking into consideration existing proposals such as unification of the Armed Services and other measures from our war experience. We must handle with care the proper allocation of emergency powers in time of war. Casting the Readiness Plan in legislative form alone is difficult. Nevertheless, significant strides have been made in recent weeks. It is our earnest hope to present the Plan to Congress at the earliest possible moment."